

Version 1.5  
January 2013



# Safeguarding Children Communication Strategy

For Peterborough Agencies

Version:	Date	Completed by:	Brief description of changes:
1.0	2007		
1.1	2008	Communication Group	Change of terminology following Communication Group
1.2	2010	Communication Group	Minor changes following Children's Trust Partnership meeting
1.3	Jan 2011	Communication Group	Additional amendments following Communications Group
1.4	May 2011	Communication Group	Additional sections to include Social Media and internal newsletters
1.5	Dec 2012	Chairs Group	Removing references to Children's Trust

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# Safeguarding Children Communications Strategy for Peterborough Agencies

## 1. Introduction

Communication is nationally recognised as an essential part of strategic planning and implementation and effective communication is a key factor in taking forward and developing services for children.

The government's Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003) emphasises the importance of communicating with children, young people, their parents and carers to improve and shape services.

"Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013" describes communication and awareness raising as a core function and points, in particular, to the importance of: "Communicating to persons and bodies, in the area of the authority, the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, raising their awareness of how this can best be done, and encouraging them to do so".

An effective communications strategy sets out the different ways in which an organisation will deliver messages to its audience, so helping it achieve its aims in an organised and targeted manner.

**This strategy has been developed by the Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board Communication and Information Group. It aims to provide an overarching framework for activity relating to the communication of the work of Peterborough agencies in their work to safeguard children. The strategy includes:**

- **how different agencies will be kept informed**
- **how to encourage two way communication and**
- **how to disseminate information on ways in which everyone can help keep children and young people safe in the city.**

These agencies include:

### **Peterborough Local Safeguarding Children Board (PSCB)**

PSCB is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how relevant organisations in the city will cooperate to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children and for ensuring that what those organisations do is effective. PSCB brings together representatives of each of the main agencies responsible for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and help to protect them from abuse and neglect. They are responsible for developing, monitoring and reviewing safeguarding policies, procedures and practice within Peterborough and for ensuring interagency training is provided for people across the city who works with children.

The membership of PSCB includes Peterborough City Council Children's Services, Educational Establishments, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Foundation Trust, Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals NHS Trust, NHS Peterborough, Peterborough Community Services, Cambs Constabulary, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Probation Trust, NSPCC and Children and Families Courts Advisory Support Service (CAFCASS).



PSCB has created a number of sub groups to undertake specific tasks on its behalf. These are:

- Quality and Effectiveness Group
- Serious Case Review Committee
- Strategic Learning and Development Group
- Safeguarding in Education Group
- E safety Group (combined with Cambridgeshire Safeguarding Children Board)
- Standing Serious Case Review Panel

Further details can be found on the website at [www.peterboroughlscb.org.uk](http://www.peterboroughlscb.org.uk)

## **2. Responsibility for the Communication Strategy**

The PSCB will take overall responsibility for ensuring effective communication across all levels of the partnerships and to lead by example. They will be supported in this role by the communications teams of Peterborough City Council and all other partner agencies.

The group will aim to communicate with all stakeholders and service users and take into account the views and comments from these groups in the ongoing development, review and evaluation of services for children and young people. The role of the decision-making processes will be as open and transparent as possible, enhanced by the use of effective communication. This will include ensuring that the members of the agencies will directly hear the views of Peterborough's children and young people.

Responsibility for the implementation of this communications strategy lies with all members of the partnerships. Individuals will be responsible for ensuring that information is kept up to date, published in a timely manner and that partner agencies are informed on partnership issues and initiatives. Partners are also responsible for ensuring that the work of the partnerships are filtered down and embedded into their respective agencies. Partnership members should also ensure that they communicate effectively with service users, and keep them updated on issues that affect them. It will be the role of the partners to implement these strategies and plans as required.

We have a responsibility to consider a wide range of communication methods for children and young people. There needs to be accessible information for all children and young people about the services offered by agencies who safeguard children. We also have responsibility to make children and young people aware of opportunities to get involved and make sure they receive timely feedback. This will be managed through the Children's Engagement Officer located within the city council's Children's Services department. Wherever possible communication activities for young people should be led by children and young people themselves as they are best placed to decide how to communicate with their peers.



### 3. Communication Aims

The aims of this strategy are:

- To set out clear communication and reporting arrangements for the partnerships and other relevant groups.
- To involve service practitioners, children, young people, their parents and carers in reviewing, designing and contributing to children's services at the earliest opportunity.
- To encourage the sharing of good practice.
- To ensure, where possible, communication from the partnerships are joined up and methods of communication are consolidated to avoid duplication (of messages).
- To communicate clearly and in a way that is easy for all to understand; using plain English and ensuring that all user groups have equal access to information.
- Ensure communities receive the information they need about local services available to them, in the most suitable and effective formats.
- Create awareness of agencies who have a role in safeguarding locally and communicate relevant information to each stakeholder group.
- Seek opportunities to promote PSCB and partner agencies' vision as laid out in the safeguarding strategy.
- To manage public expectations of the PSCB.

### 4. Communication Objectives

The agencies in Peterborough which have a responsibility to safeguard children have the following objectives:

- To raise awareness of their role and work.
- To support all partners to understand their contribution.
- To keep all stakeholders up to date with developments.
- To promote the active engagement of all stakeholders in the Board's work.
- To facilitate good two-way communication between members and children, young people and families.
- To share good practice, ideas and good news.
- To ensure agencies members understand their responsibilities in respect of communication.
- To define and implement clear lines and methods of communication and to ensure consistency and openness wherever possible.

### Principles

The communications strategy reflects a number of core communications principles. These are:



- Openness and honesty
- Timeliness
- Accuracy
- Accessibility
- Support of safeguarding agencies' priorities.

This means:

- Speaking and writing in plain English. Plain English means that we use language that everyone understands. When talking to children, young people, parents and carers we avoid using jargon or we will explain the medical, technical or management language we are using.
- Not speaking in acronyms or initials or explaining them first.
- Being aware of our body language and how it might communicate to those we are talking or listening to. Trying to actively listen and hold eye contact when involved in face-to-face communication.
- Recognising that people do not always absorb information completely at first hearing. Giving people the opportunity to ask questions there and then or on another occasion if they need to.
- Feeling comfortable about telling people when we do not understand what they are saying or what they have written. Being comfortable with challenging others and being challenged ourselves and as a learning organisation welcoming feedback and constructive criticism.
- Always trying to put ourselves in the position of those we are communicating with and treating people how we would like to be treated through both face-to-face and written communications.

## 5. Key Messages

The key messages which we need to convey are:

### For everyone

- What safeguarding is.
- Safeguarding is a responsibility shared across the whole community.
- What the different responsibilities to safeguard are and how they should be fulfilled.
- A basic understanding of the role of the agencies involved in safeguarding and how can they be accessed.
- How to become involved in any of these agencies.
- How to access the inter agency safeguarding procedures, the guidance provided by these and obligations set out within them.
- Key changes in safeguarding nationally and locally and the implications of these.



- The outcomes of serious case reviews including action plans and agency responses to issues of concern.
- The successes of agencies involved in safeguarding

### **Children and Young People**

- How to keep yourself safe.
- What to do if you/someone you know is being harmed/ harming themselves.
- A basic understanding of the child protection system and what it means for those involved in it.

### **Voluntary and Community Organisations**

- What support/help agencies can provide; in particular, help with developing training programmes, accessing multi-agency and other training and with developing safeguarding policies and practice.
- How to access this help and advice.
- What good safeguarding practice is and how this can be provided.
- Peterborough agencies who have a responsibility to safeguard children and how to become involved with them.
- How to access the Inter-agency Safeguarding Procedures, the guidance provided by these and obligations set out within them.
- How to recruit staff and volunteers safely and deal with allegations made against them.

### **Parent and Carers**

- How to provide safe parenting.
- Sources of parenting advice and support.
- How to protect your children and any others you are responsible for.
- What to do if someone you know is being harmed/ harming themselves.
- The role of the different agencies involved in safeguarding and how the safeguarding process works.

### **Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board and its partners, statutory agencies, their employees and other professionals in the Children's Workforce**

- The role of the agencies involved in safeguarding.
- How to contact them
- Availability and accessibility of training.
- Availability and implications of multi-agency policy and procedures – in particular the inter agency safeguarding procedures.



- How to access agencies involved in safeguarding with concerns about agency practice and what will happen in response.
- Recommendations from serious case reviews and how they should be implemented.
- What represents good/best safeguarding practice, how this is demonstrated within agencies and how it can be replicated
- The shared beliefs, organisational intentions and commitments set out in the inter agency safeguarding procedures.

## 6. Audience/stakeholders

The principal targets of agency activity contained within this strategy are:

- children and young people
- parents and carers
- staff and managers in all partner organisations and any other agencies with statutory responsibilities
- relevant voluntary, community and faith organisations
- the general public.

We must also communicate effectively with:

- local media
- elected members
- trade unions
- other safeguarding boards
- the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board
- government departments
- national organisations such as OfSTED.

## 7. Communication channels/resources

Agencies will use a variety of communication methods to include the following

### Websites

[www.peterboroughscb.org.uk](http://www.peterboroughscb.org.uk)

This will be the principal method of accessing information about the agencies with sections for professionals, parents and carers and children and young people.



There will also be access to training and development resources, all safeguarding policies and procedures including the Inter agency Safeguarding Procedures, and a range of other advice and guidance.

### Newsletters

Available through websites, these are distributed in hard copy at events and electronically to those on agency contact lists. PSCB newsletters cover general information about the Board, its work and developments in safeguarding and training nationally and locally. It seeks to promote evidence based practice using learning from national and local research, including serious case reviews

Other newsletters include

Name	Organisation/audience	Format
Insite	Peterborough City Council	website
Line manager briefing sheets	Peterborough City Council	email
Team briefing sheets	Peterborough City Council	email
Wrapper	Children's Services staff	Internal electronic newsletter sent by email
Members' bulletin	All City Councillors	
VoiCes	Voluntary sector	
Pulse	Hospital staff newsletter	hard copy
Connect	Cambridgeshire Community Services staff newsletter	electronic
Local Policing Summary	Cambridgeshire Constabulary	Electronic with some hard copies (tbc for this year's version) Published September
Chief Constable's Annual Report	Cambridgeshire Constabulary	
Blueprint	Cambridgeshire Constabulary (officers and staff)	e-zine (quarterly publication)
Local Policing Plan	Cambridgeshire Police Authority	On force and PA websites. Summary leaflet also published in hard copy. Published annually in June

### Information leaflets

There are a range of information leaflets available on specific topics such as reporting concerns, assessments, enquiries and conferences. These are available from partner agencies' websites or by application to the PSCB office.

### Event attendance

Agencies seek to attend relevant meetings, conferences and other events for children and young people, parents and carers and public service professionals.



## **Training**

Full details about training are accessible via agency websites or by contacting the relevant Training and Development Manager. Training flyers are distributed to the agency contact lists and by the Workforce Development Department.

Training events provide opportunities to promote basic safeguarding awareness and to communicate about the work of the safeguarding agencies and to promote good safeguarding practice, policy and procedure and any other relevant issues. Information leaflets and newsletters can also be distributed.

## **Conferences and other events**

Details of conferences are published on the website and flyers sent to the agency contact lists.

Conferences provide opportunities for practitioners to meet, exchange and receive information about high profile topics, for the agencies to promote their work and raise its profile in the eyes of those attending. Information leaflets and newsletters can also be distributed

## **Briefings**

Agencies provide briefings for interested parties on relevant subjects to enable local and national information to be disseminated promptly and to as wide a audience as possible

## **Posters and other branding and marketing**

Materials will be produced for the PSCB in line with this strategy and any subsequent marketing campaigns that are developed.

## **Minutes**

Comprehensive minutes are kept of all PSCB and other agency meetings, which are circulated to members and other stakeholder groups

Information from meetings that are required to be more widely disseminated than the minute circulation lists will go out via meeting summaries/newsletters/information leaflets/website etc.

However those containing details of specific cases must remain confidential.

## **Media Relations**

Local and/or national pro-active news/press releases/statements will be made to accompany specific events such as an annual conference and/or launch of major new policy and procedure. These will promote positive developments in safeguarding with the aim of developing a positive understanding of the safeguarding agenda amongst the press and general public.

Other media use will include

- Local features
- Specialist titles:
  - o Children & Young People Now
  - o Community Care
  - o Times Educational Supplement
  - o Nursery World



- Youth Work Now
- Special Children magazine
- Jane's Police Review
- Police Professional

### **Social media**

Facebook and Twitter pages of the partner organisations will be used to promote proactive messages about the work of the Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board. This will include information about events, new procedure and new policy. Social media will predominantly be used to disseminate information that has been released in a proactive press release or statement, to enable the board to reach as wide an audience as possible.

### **Bluetooth**

Bluetooth can reach a wide number of users in a short time period without the need for collecting phone numbers and personally identifiable information. Messages can be sent via Bluetooth between 30 and 100 metres away to any mobile phone or laptop with Bluetooth turned on and set to discoverable. As an example, Bluetooth messaging could be used at a large-scale public event to remind parents to keep a close eye on their children when in crowds.

## **8. Evaluation**

The communications strategy will be evaluated by

- Annual Survey – understanding of shared vision, values etc.
- Number of hits on agencies' website by end of each financial year
- Number of hits on newsletter
- Feedback from any annual events.

## **9. Updating the communications strategy**

The communications strategy will be updated by the PSCB operational chairs group as required based on evaluation from communications activity and feedback from the partnerships.

## **10. Branding**



**Our vision is the safeguard and protect all the children in Peterborough**



## Appendix A

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### Media strategy for response to serious incidents – led by PSCB

In these circumstances, PSCB will have a single initial point of contact for the media which will be the Corporate Communications Team at Peterborough City Council.

Members of PSCB should only talk to the media after having first cleared this with the Communications Team and when they are clear what they want to get across to the media.

Anyone speaking on behalf of the PSCB must ensure that the media knows who they are representing.

#### Public and Media Interest in Child Maltreatment

It is the responsibility of Designated Senior Managers in each agency, alongside the Chair of PSCB to anticipate public and media interest in the death or serious injury of a child, or in the investigation of organised abuse under the umbrella of the PSCB Safeguarding Procedures.

The Chair, together with the Designated Senior Managers in liaison with their press officers, must consult to formulate and agree a strategy for managing public information and make the necessary and timely arrangements for any press releases. When agreeing a strategy for managing public information consideration must be given to the following:

- The need to maintain confidentiality in respect of personal information contained within reports on the child, family members and others;
- The accountability of public services and the importance of maintaining public confidence in the process of internal review;
- The need to secure full and open participation from the different agencies and professionals involved;
- The responsibility to provide relevant information to those with a legitimate interest;
- The constraints on sharing information when criminal proceedings are outstanding, in that access to the contents of information may not be within the control of PSCB.
- It is the duty of the Senior Managers to ensure that all staff undertaking enquiries are aware of the agreed strategy and response to approaches by the public and media representatives, and are enabled to proceed with their work without excessive public pressure and exposure.

#### **Specific Media Enquiries**

A dialogue with key contacts will be established to determine which organisation will take lead responsibility for responding to media enquiries relating to any specific event. This could be a national case, a change in legislation or other occurrence resulting in media attention. This initial dialogue will establish which matters, if any, will be handled collectively by the Board and which will be handled by individual Board partners.



Ongoing responsibility for co-ordinating this activity will remain with the Communications Team, except where the key contacts agree that the press office of another Board partner will take the lead in a particular case. The PSCB Business Manager will be kept informed of all actions undertaken and will be sent a copy of all communication with the media for inclusion in the audit trail.

### **Local Serious Case Review Media Enquiries**

For those cases which are the subject of a serious case review a checklist of the respective responsibilities of the key contacts of the Board partners is set out below.

The Communications Team will maintain an ongoing dialogue with the Chair of the Serious Case Review Group in order to maintain awareness of all cases that are being considered against the relevant criteria to trigger a serious case review.

#### Creation of case media leads group

Following a decision to conduct a serious case review the Communications Team will convene an early meeting of the key communications contacts of all relevant PSCB partners (or will liaise directly outside a meeting if more urgent) to form a case media leads group. There shall be separate case media leads group for each separate serious case review. Its membership will be drawn from the agencies represented on that particular Serious Case Review Committee.

#### First meeting of case media leads group

At the first meeting of each case media leads group a decision will be taken to establish which Board partner is best placed to take lead responsibility on an ongoing basis (and hence chair, service and convene future meetings of that group). This decision may be provisional and reviewed later as further details emerge. If there is not a clear lead Board partner the local authority press office will continue to co-ordinate this work. If there is insufficient capacity or resilience, this work will be shared as agreed between the Board partners.

Even where the local authority is not a significant player in relation to a specific case, the local authority press office will remain a member of the case media leads group in order to provide co-ordination and learning between different cases.

#### Subsequent meetings of case media leads group

Later meetings of the Case Media Leads Group will consider and advise upon the release of information into the public domain in line with guiding principles set out in strategy. In so doing the Case Media leads Group will:

- Agree and thereafter monitor and amend the overall communication strategy for the case;
- Identify any tensions between the agencies (which might, for example arise because of different reporting systems), and where these are not readily resolved, escalate as appropriate and manage around them;
- Consider the timing and content of any joint press statements;



- Consider whether and if so when to hold a press conference;
- Consider the need for any related communication activity in support of the release of the serious case review report and executive summary, and any associated action plans and;
- Ultimately, hold a suitable debrief, identifying lessons learnt, and report back to the Safeguarding Children Board.

#### Activity of lead partner outside meetings of the case media leads review group

Outside meetings the agreed lead Board partner will:

- Draft a holding statement for the Board (and agree it with the Chair of the Board), and co-ordinate draft statements prepared by each agency;
- Put in place agreed media monitoring arrangements, and co-ordinate media activity by the relevant agencies;
- Draft a communication strategy for the case;
- Convene further meetings of the case media leads group as necessary (and liaise directly outside those meetings as necessary) and:
- Brief the Chair of the Board, the Chair of the Serious Case Review Group and the Director of Children's Services, on an ongoing basis.

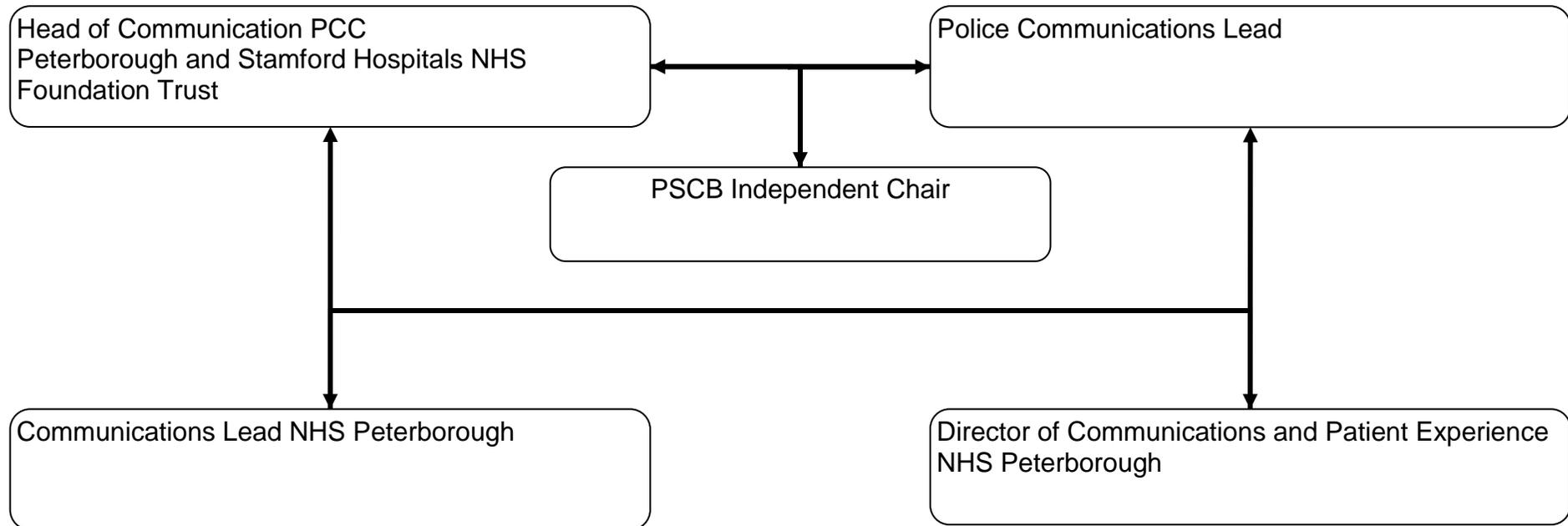
#### Activity of board partners outside meetings of the case media leads review group

Outside meetings each Board partner member of the case media leads group will

- Liaise internally within the partner organisation to ensure they are suitably briefed (including for example being briefed on any single agency reports available);
- Draft a holding statement for that agency and share it with the lead agency key contact;
- Respond to any media enquiries relevant to their organisation (or refer on others as appropriate) and promptly advise the other agency leads;
- Collate their own agency's needs and information for integration into the collective communication strategy including:
  - identification of key audiences
  - identification of key dates
  - deadlines and processes
  - identification of key messages
  - identification of spokespeople and media train as necessary.
- Liaise as appropriate with key liaison contacts for family members, to ensure that family members do not learn distressing news for the first time through the media and liaise as appropriate with appropriate contacts in regulatory bodies, Government departments etc.



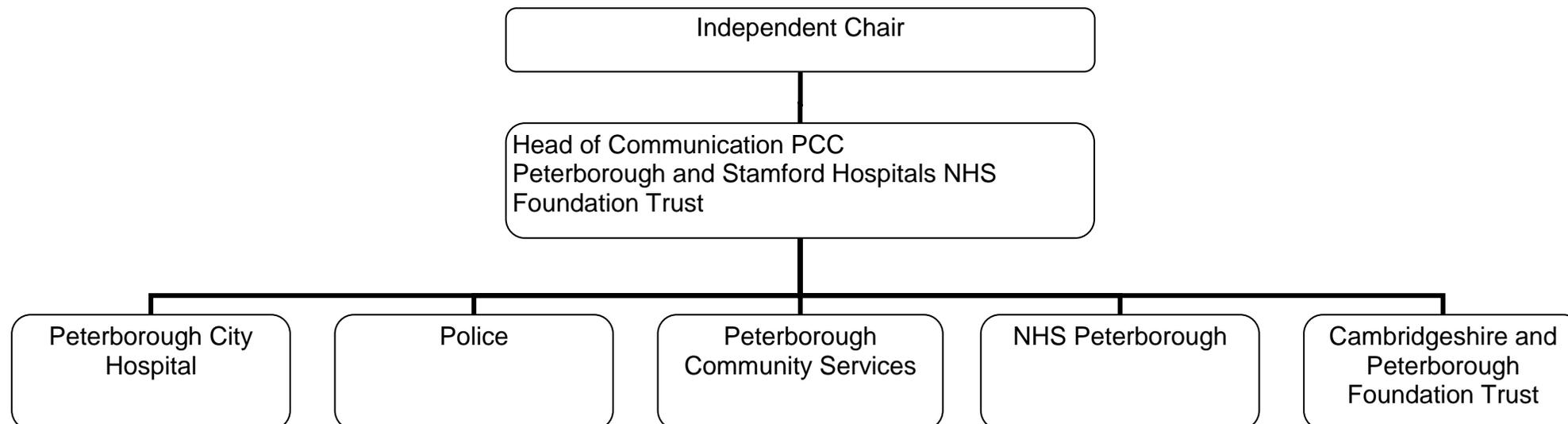
**MEDIA ALERT IN RELATION TO A SERIOUS INCIDENT INVOLVING A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON**



- All alerts to Peterborough City Council (PCC) in first instance as PCC lead for PSCB communications.
- All reactive statements must be shared with PSCB Chair / Vice Chair.
- All initial responses to media requests should be from PSCB, not individual agency.
- PSCB office to notify operational leads as well as communications lead to ensure two-pronged approach.
- All communications leads to inform operation lead in their own agency.



## **FLOW CHART - MEDIA ALERT IN RELATION TO SERIOUS CASE REVIEWS**



- All alerts to Peterborough City Council (PCC) in first instance as PCC lead for PSCB comms.
- All reactive statements held against enquiries re serious case review's (SCR) must be shared with PSCB Chair / Vice Chair.
- All initial responses to media requests should be from PSCB, not individual agency.
- PSCB Office to notify operational leads as well as communications lead to ensure two-pronged approach.
- All Communications leads to inform operation lead in own agency.
- When SCR evaluated, aim to have published on website within a month.
- When SCR received back from OFSTED, Chair of SCR panel will call extraordinary meeting of the panel – this will include consideration of how family is to be informed.



## MEDIA PROTOCOL – CONTACT DETAILS

<b>Name of Agency</b>	<b>Comms Lead + (Deputy)</b>	<b>Operational Lead + (Deputy)</b>
Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	01733 678024	01733 677927
NHS Cambs	07983127343	01223 725587
NHS Peterborough	01733 758 404	
Cambs Police		Appropriate senior investigating officer for the case
Peterborough CC		01733 452304 Ou07920160000
CPFT	01223 726760	01223 726772 07946446179
Cambs Community Services (CCS)	07754 885331 01733 758458	
PSCB	Chair Business Manager 01733 863745	



**COMMUNICATION PLAN**

**MILESTONE: XXXXXXXXXX**

**Campaign theme: XXXXXXXXX**

<i>Key message</i>	<i>Audience</i>	<i>Communications method</i>	<i>Deadline date</i>	<i>Publication date</i>	<i>Lead officer</i>

**All communications to be approved by:**

- PSCB Chair

Logos for use: Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board